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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 001955

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/INS
LONDON FOR POL - RIEDEL

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [NP](#) [GON](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: PARTIES LOOKING FOR "FLEXIBILITY" FROM KING

REF: KATHMANDU 1947 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: POL PMAHONEY. REASON: 1.5 (B,D).

1. (C) The October 9 deadline set by King Gyanendra for political parties to forward their nominations for the interim Cabinet (Reftel) appears ready to pass without any names having been submitted. A Palace source said the parties had so far sent no nominations to the King. The King, who does not want to allow the deadline to slip too far, is reportedly weighing the possibility of announcing the Prime Minister and two ministers by October 10--with or without the consensus of the parties--and then tasking the new PM with consulting with the parties on the other members of the Cabinet. The upcoming Dasain holiday (October 13-20) can provide some much-needed breathing space to allow this delicate process to play out, the source observed.

2. (C) Madhav Nepal, leader of the Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist (UML), told the Ambassador October 9 that his party views the King's action in sacking the government of former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and assuming executive power as unconstitutional. Nonetheless, the UML is looking ahead at how to deal with this new reality. Since the Nepali Congress has lost the moral authority to govern, he stated, the UML has a legitimate claim to the post of prime minister. The UML is willing to be flexible on this point, but the King should also show "flexibility and large-heartedness" by choosing the PM and forming the new government in consultation with the six parties. Not all members of the Cabinet have to be politicians--some can be technocrats--but the post of Prime Minister must be held by a political figure with the experience and mass-based support needed to create the proper atmosphere for holding elections. Nepal said the six major parties (minus the Deuba wing of the Nepali Congress) are still seeking a joint meeting with the King to press their views, which so far has not been granted. That meeting may be granted October 10, he believes. He indicated that if the six party leaders are allowed to meet together with the King, the King might then meet separately with each, if he chooses, to work out the details of the Cabinet. By Nepal's calculations, the King can extend the deadline for Cabinet nominations to October 11 and still be able to form the government before the Dasain holiday.

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